

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7133

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 13707

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON RECENT EPMG STATEMENTS

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 13463; B) FBIS LONDON 210033ZNOV75;

C) FBIS LONDON 210112ZNOV75

EMBASSY HAS FOLLOWING COMMENT ON THE CONTENTS OF REF B
(REF C IS SUBSUMED IN LATTER).

1. WE SEE REF B DECLARATION AS ADDRESSING MANY OF THE MAJOR
POLITICAL ISSUES CURRENTLY BEFORE THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE. IT
REPORTS STATEMENT WHICH IS AN INTERESTING MIX OF SOMEWHAT DATED
DIRG RHETORIC AND PMAC'S CURRENT CONCERNS.

2. TO BEGIN WITH, REF B STATEMENT STRIKES US AS VERY DEFEN-
SIVE: "NO POWER CAN SPLIT THE REVOLUTION...", IT BEGINS, ONLY
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TO CONTINUE IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER WITH A CONDEMNATION OF THE

SPLITTERS AND REACTIONARIES WHO ARE SEEKING TO DIVIDE ETHIOPIANS FOR REASONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST.

3. AGAIN, EARLY IN THE TEXT, THERE IS A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER THE WIDENING GAP BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE PEOPLE. UNITY IS ASSERTED: "SOLDIERS ARE THE CLASS PARTNERS OF THE BROAD MASSES ... THE CHANGE WAS CARRIED OUT TOGETHER. THOSE WHO THINK IT WAS EFFECTED WITHOUT THE SOLDIER MUST BE REGARDED AS ENEMIES ..." WE THINK THESE REPEATED EXHORTATIONS ON THE CONTINUING UNITY BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND PROGRESSIVES REACT TO WHAT WE HAVE REPORTED INTER ALIA IN OUR A-188, A SPREADING SENSE OF PUBLIC DISAPPOINTMENT IN DIRG LEADERSHIP, AND RESENTMENT AT MILITARY PRIVILEGE.

4. THE EMPHASIS ON THE MILITARY'S DESIRE TO "RETURN TO BARRACHS" AND TO HAND POWER BACK TO "SINCERE PROGRESSIVE" CIVILIANS IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY. IT IS RESPONSIVE, ONCE AGAIN, TO THE INADEQUACIES OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP WHICH THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE HAVE INCREASINGLY PERCEIVED DURING THE PAST YEAR. THIS SORT OF TALK OF COURSE FUELS EXPECTATIONS FOR AN EARLY RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH MAY WELL BE MET ONLY IN PART, IF AT ALL. REFERENCES TO THE HANDOVER OF POWER BY THE MILITARY "WHEN THE TASK IS DONE" IS ALSO LIKELY TO BE GREETED WITH CONSIDERABLE CYNICISM BY ETHIOPIA'S URBAN ELITES.

5. THE CHARGE THAT REACTIONARIES AND OTHER EGOTISTICAL ELEMENTS IN ETHIOPIA WHO OPPOSE THE REVOLUTION ARE OUT TO "DESTROY THE UNITY OF ETHIOPIA ... AND THUS LEAD THE PEOPLE TO DESTRUCTION" WE SEE AS AN ATTEMPT TO ASSOCIATE DISSENTERS IN THE PUBLIC MIND WITH SECESSIONISTS OR WOULD-BE SECESSIONISTS IN ERITREA, TIGRE AND DEGEMDIR. IN SHORT, THESE ELEMENTS OF THE STATEMENT APPEAR AS AN ATTEMPT TO RALLY THE PARTISANS OF NATIONAL UNITY TO THE DIRG DESPITE THE RESERVATIONS OF MANY, IN THE NAME OF OVERRIDING ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS. THESE ALLUSIONS ALSO REFLECT RISING PUBLIC FEARS HERE THAT THE ERITREAN INSURGENCY IS ABOUT TO INFECT NEIGHBORING PROVINCES. THESE FEARS WE JUDGE TO BE WIDESPREAD, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE COUNTRY'S ELITES WHO BLAME--BEYOND EDU'S LEADERS WHO ARE AFTER ALL ONLY DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY--THE DIRG FOR ITS OVER-RELIANCE ON FORCE. INDEED, WE HAVE HEARD SOME OFFICIALS SPEAKING OFF THE RECORD, COMPARE

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THE OUTLOOK FOR ETHIOPIA WITH CURRENT EVENTS IN ANGOLA.

6. THE APPEAL TO STUDENTS TO STAY IN LINE AND MEET THE RESPONSIBILITIES TO THEIR COMPATRIOTS IMPOSED UPON THEM BY THEIR EDUCATION IS ALSO STRIKING. IT IS RESPONSIVE TO CONTINUED STUDENT ANTI-DIRG AGITATION IN FAVOR OF A RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE. THE APPEAL TO LABOR FOR DISCIPLINE AND PRODUCTIVITY BETRAYS AN AWARENESS, FINALLY, OF THE FRUSTRATION AND DISCONTENT WITH

DIRG REPRESSION IN THE DISORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT.
HUMMEL

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